



Schenectady County
Historical
Society

Newsletter

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Photo by Pat Barrot

RE-ENACTMENT WEEKEND AT MABEE FARM MAY 20-21

Although rain cancelled events on Sunday, battles were fierce between Natives, British, and Militia on Saturday, May 20th. "It was as if we were watching a movie" said one spectator. Troops moved among the historic houses and the air was heavy with smoke. To add to the excitement, the 2nd Continental Light Dragoons mounted their horses and gave visitors a

glimpse of cavalry in action during the American Revolution. Special thanks to Matt Zembo and the 62nd Regiment of Foot who hosted the event, the *Burning of the Valley Military Association* who supported it, and our friends from the 2nd Regiment Albany County Militia. See page seven for more color photos.

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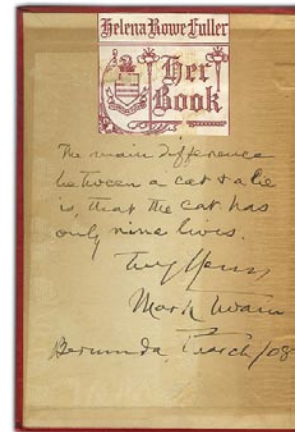
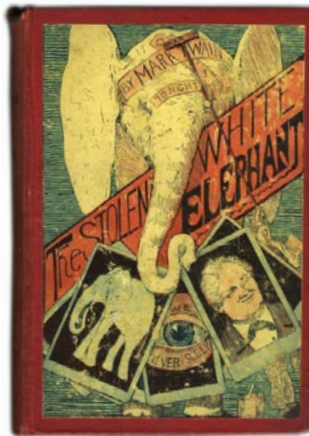
HOURS

MUSEUM
MONDAY-FRIDAY 1-5
SATURDAY 10-4

LIBRARY
MONDAY-FRIDAY 1-5
SATURDAY 9-12

MABEE FARM
TUESDAY-SATURDAY 10-4

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



One of the great joys of working at the Society is that people keep bringing us interesting things. About a month ago, Librarian Ginny Bolen came into the office to show me a little-known book of detective stories by Mark Twain, *The Stolen White Elephant*. The book, depicted above, was one of several from the library of former city and county historian Larry Hart and donated to SCHS by his son Alan. My excitement peaked when Ginny showed me that the book was autographed by Twain in Bermuda in 1908 and inscribed to a certain Helena Rowe Fuller.

One of the hundreds of family files archived at SCHS is that of the Fuller family. When Trustee Elsie Maddaus noted that the autographed copy of Mark Twain's book contained the book plate of a person named Fuller, she went straight to that file, found the connection to the Crooks file, and therein found that Larry Hart had written Gazette articles about Helena twice, once on November 21, 1959 and then again in 1962, two days after her death on 9/11 of that year.

Mrs. Helena Rowe Fuller Crooks (1881-1962), a member of a prominent Scotia family, lived at 8 Sanders Avenue in that village. Among her Fuller ancestors was the architect Samuel Fuller, himself the descendant of one of two brothers who arrived on the Mayflower, and at least the third Samuel in the lineage to bear that name. He first came to Schenectady in 1758. In addition to many other structures, he designed the Guy (Johnson) Park Mansion in Amsterdam, the Episcopal Church of Schenectady, the John Glen Mansion on Washington Avenue, the Ten Eyck Mansion—later the home of Governor Joseph C. Yates—the Daniel Campbell Mansion at the corner of State and Church streets, and the "Hermitage," the first home built on the farm of John Duncan of Niskayuna, the site of the now-threatened Ingersoll Memorial Home that was once owned by Schuylers and Stanfords.

Mrs. Crooks was an avid breeder of German Shepherds who, serially of course, owned and trained 65 of them. In the 1950s through shortly before her death, she was the author of the Schenectady Union-Star column "Let's Talk Dogs". Mrs. Crooks, the only child of a wealthy family, was a world traveler who met many famous people.

From the earlier column, Mr. Hart, wrote: "It was while vacationing in Bermuda in 1908 that Helena met and became good friends with that whimsical author, Mark Twain. She still has the book *The Stolen White Elephant*, published in London in 1908, that he gave her. On the flyleaf is penned the inscription:

*The main difference between a cat and a lie is that the cat has only nine lives.
Truly yours, Mark Twain...Bermuda, March 1908.*

When Ginny Bolen first showed me this book, bequeathed first to Larry Hart and then to his son, Alan, who gave it to the Society, she and I had a brief discussion as to the suitability of this particular book for our collection. The only fiction we ordinarily acquire is scholarly historical fiction pertaining to upstate NY.

"Well," she reasoned, "Mark Twain was a prominent New York State author; perhaps we should make an exception." But any doubt as to the book's deserving an honored place in the Gremis-Doolittle Library was resolved through Elsie Maddaus's discovery of the link to Helena Crooks, a historic local personage in her own right.

Ed Reilly

Museum of Schenectady History

"A Desirable Residence": Schenectady and the Erie Canal

Throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century Schenectady maintained a flourishing business of building riverboats as well as a brisk business in trading along the Mohawk River. Fees were charged for docking and for warehousing goods, and business was good for accommodating travelers in overnight lodging as well as in the taverns that provided food and drink. All of these profitable ventures were threatened by the advent of the Erie Canal. Fear of the effect of the Erie Canal on Schenectady's economy was so great that one concerned citizen complained in the *Schenectady Cabinet*, a local newspaper, that "our city is on the decline." As thousands celebrated the opening of the Erie Canal, it was said that in Schenectady, only the engineering students of Union College greeted the first canal boats with enthusiasm.

Despite the inauspicious beginnings of the Erie Canal in Schenectady, river traffic and canal traffic thrived during the nineteenth century. The Erie Canal brought additional businesses to the city and helped the community grow. Because of its position on the Erie Canal Schenectady became a natural stopping point for passengers going to Albany or for loading products on their way to the west. More transportation opportunities came with the DeWitt Clinton railroad which carried canal passengers from Schenectady to Albany. The Erie Canal closed in the early twentieth century but not before it had developed a rich history with its own culture, traditions, and lore surrounding it.

For a look back in time, come celebrate the Erie Canal in Schenectady County with the new exhibit "A Desirable Residence": *Schenectady and the Erie Canal*. Enjoy many of the images and objects of the Erie Canal days from the collections of the Schenectady County Historical Society. Bring the whole family on July 8th or 9th for Canal Fest. There will be free tours of the Schenectady County Historical Society as well as games and crafts. View a working scale model of the DeWitt Clinton railroad! Bring family and friends this summer and enjoy this tribute to the Erie Canal in Schenectady

Family Summer Fun! A Family Victorian Tea

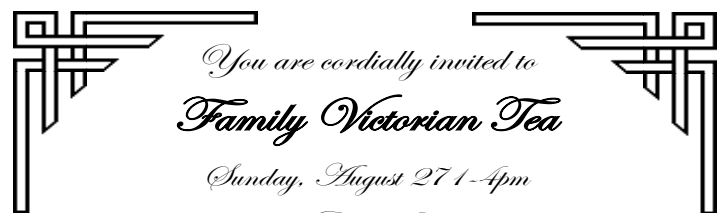
On August 27th join the Schenectady County Historical Society in celebrating one of the classic traditions of the Victorian age in America - an English tea! Americans became fascinated with everything English during Queen Victoria's reign in England. They emulated English styles and customs including the English tea ceremony and the very un-English Christmas tree which Queen Victoria and her German husband Prince Albert introduced in the 1850s.

Enjoy a day with the whole family as the Schenectady County Historical Society celebrates this unique tradition! Dress up in your party best or in your Victorian finest! Sample a variety of teas served (along with punch) while

enjoying traditional tea treats like tasty tea sandwiches and petits fours (more traditional treats will be available for the less than adventurous tea drinkers)! For the more daring, partake in historical games and let your children or grandchildren learn what their great-great-great grandparents enjoyed! Learn how children entertained themselves before the advent of television, computers, and Nintendo. After a hearty sampling of historic foods and some invigorating activities, sit down and try your hand at a variety of crafts that children would have made at the turn of the twentieth century. Learn about Victorian children's fashion while creating a hair bow barrette, or a folding fan, or make a Victorian pinwheel, a timeless toy still popular today. Create your own piece of history to take home that will provide a wonderful reminder of this old fashioned chance to connect with your whole family!

Reservations required.

For more information please contact Kate Weller at (518) 374-0263 or at curator@schist.org.



*You are cordially invited to
Family Victorian Tea*

Sunday, August 27 / 4pm

on the Garden Terrace

Schenectady County Historical Society

32 Washington Ave.

Schenectady



A party for the whole family



tea sandwiches & sweets

craft making & games



\$15.00 per adult & \$10.00 per child

\$30.00 per family

.....

Name: _____

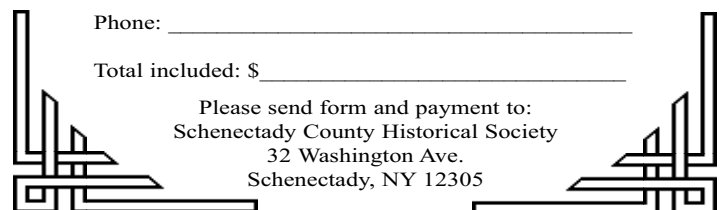
Address: _____

Number attending: _____

Phone: _____

Total included: \$ _____

Please send form and payment to:
Schenectady County Historical Society
32 Washington Ave.
Schenectady, NY 12305



Grems-Doolittle Library

Acquisitions for April and May 2006

AUTHOR		TITLE	GIFT from
Graham	Ian	Colonists From Scotland	
Dobson	David	American Data from the records of the High Court of the Admiralty of Scotland	
Scott	Kenneth	NYS Census of the county of Albany	
Scott	Kenneth	Genealogical data from Colonial NY newspapers	
Smith	Clifford Neal	19 th Century Germans to America	
Mitchell	Brian	A New Genealogical Atlas of Ireland, 2 nd ed	
Grenham	John	Tracing Your Irish Ancestors	
Taylor	Alan	The Divided Ground	
NY Telephone		Schenectady Telephone Directory 1938-1939	Diane Gade
Brill	Debra	History of the Brill Company	Ralph Gasner
Otterness	Philip	Becoming German: The 1709 Palatine Migration to New York	Ted & Melba Schoenberg
		GE Women's Club Invitational brochure	Melba Schoenberg
		GE News -May 25, 1951	Melba Schoenberg
Lape	Fred	A Farm and Village Boyhood	Anonymous
Sutch	Gerald E.	The Civil War: The Town of Prattsville, and the neighboring Greene, Delaware, & Schoharie County Area	Anonymous
Hamlin	Huybertie Pruyn	An Albany Girlhood	Anonymous
Canal Society of New York		The Cayuga and Seneca Canal	Malcolm Horton
Canal Society of New York		The Champlain Canal: from Watervliet to Whitehall	Malcolm Horton

Index to Genealogical Publications

Did you know that all issues of the Society's newsletter since its inception are indexed in the Periodical Source Index (PERSI)? You can find this wonderful index to genealogical publications from genealogical societies and historical societies on the Heritage Quest database available at many local libraries, usually remotely. Check with your local public library for details.

New Schenectady Gazette index available

Library volunteer, Ann Hicks, working for more than a year, has created an index to the 1930 Schenectady Gazette for all vital records. She has done a page by page search to locate items of genealogical interest such as: vital records of births and deaths, accident reports, divorces, marriages, and engagements. This Fall check our website for a Request Form to look up records of interest to you. Thank you, Ann !!

Efner History Center

Located in Schenectady's City Hall – take the elevator to the attic

During the month of July there will be a pictorial exhibit entitled “Of Bridges, Boulevards, and Canals - Images of a Changing Schenectady.” During summer business hours of 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM visitors can view this exhibit in the display case located in the hallway just outside the History Center in the attic.

By mid-June and for the rest of the summer there will be a display inside the History Center entitled “Summertime Travel Fever: Gems from the Sebring Collections.” This nostalgic view of travel will include travel postcards, train timetables, and other vacation memorabilia.

A Great Gift:

The Efner History Center and the Schenectady County Historical Society are joint beneficiaries of the estate of the late John Papp. John was an avid photographer and writer of historical pamphlets copies of which are for sale at the Society gift shops. He once served as the historian for the Town of Rotterdam and, over the course of his life, John took many photographs of locations, people and events in Schenectady County. He also collected works by other photographers. John Papp died last year and in his Will he designated the Efner Center and the Schenectady County Historical Society as the beneficiaries of his immense collection of photographs, negatives, and copies of his booklets. Both institutions have received materials from John in the past. Receipt of this final legacy is gratefully anticipated. It will be a joy to process this bequest and to make it available for public viewing.

The **Greens Corners One-Room School Museum**, built circa 1825, will be open for visitors weekends, 1:00 – 4:00 PM starting July 1st and 2nd; the last weekend will be August 26th and 27th, thereafter by appointment only through October 15th. It's a great opportunity to show your grandchildren part of the “good old days”. The school is located in West Glenville on Potter Road near the intersection with Greens Corners Rd. For further information call Adrienne Karis at 372-6314

If there are serious students of history interested in doing some summertime community service, we would love to have you contact us about archival projects that need to be done in the History Center. Our hours can be adjusted to accommodate student needs. Projects include such tasks as the blueprint research project; sorting and filing photographs; photocopying documents; general filing, and data entry.

The History Center in the “awesome attic” of City Hall is managed by the Schenectady County Historical Society. You can contact the managing archivist, Cynthia Seacord, at hscenter@nycap.rr.com for more information.

Canal Fest Events at the Schenectady County Historical Society

Come to the Schenectady County Historical Society and celebrate Canal Fest on Friday, **July 8th and Saturday, July 9th.** View our new exhibit “*A Desirable Residence*”: *Schenectady and the Erie Canal* which looks at the rich history of the Erie Canal in Schenectady County.

On Saturday, July 8th, enjoy free tours of the museum every hour on the hour between 11:00 AM and 4:00 PM. Outside on the grounds enjoy activities for the whole family such as games and crafts that were popular during the Erie Canal era. There will also be a free tour of the Stockade District at 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM.

On Sunday, July 9th enjoy a full day meant for the whole family at Riverside Park. Free tours of the museum will continue between 1:00 and 4:00 PM. Children's games will be offered at Riverside Park from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. Bring the whole family and spend the weekend in historic Schenectady.

Canal Splash

The New York State Canal Corporation will be conducting the first annual Canal Splash on the weekend of **August 12 and 13, 2006.** This will be a coordinated series of locally organized events designed to highlight the history, beauty, culture and recreational appeal of the New York State Canal System and/ or Canalway Trail.

Schedule for Mabee Farm Canal Fest, Lock 7-12

Saturday, July 8 from 1 – 7 pm

- 1-2 Gary Van Slyke
- 1-3 Wagon Rides
- 2-3 Whitman & Pantell
- 2:30 Percussion Workshop with Gary Van Slyke.
- 3-4 Riverview Ramblers
- 3:30 Workshop on American historical work songs with Whitman & Pantell
- 4-5 John Kirk, Trish Miller & Cedar Stanstreet
- 5:30 – 7 Barn Dance with John Kirk, Trish Miller & Cedar Stanstreet

Sunday, July 9 from 1-5 pm

- 1-5 Kayak Demonstrations with Adirondack Paddle & Pole
- 1:30 Harmony Workshop with Annie & the Hedonists
- 2-3 George Ward
- 2:30 Beginner & Intermediate Guitar Workshop with Chris Shaw
- 3-4 Annie & the Hedonists
- 4-5 Chris Shaw & Bridget Ball

EARLY AMERICAN INDUSTRIES REGIONAL MEETING AT MABEE FARM

Early American Industries will hold their regional meeting at the Mabee Farm on July 22nd. Tailgating starts at 9:30 followed by display & talks by Charlie Long on broom making history, a Dutch Architecture site tour by Bill McMillen and blacksmithing by John Ackner.

CALL FOR ARTISTS & CRAFTSPEOPLE

The third annual Arts & Crafts Festival will be held on Saturday, August 26th from 10 am – 5 pm. The Mabee Farm is looking for people to exhibit fine arts & crafts. Cost is \$30.00 for a 10' x 10' and \$50.00 for a 20' x 20' exhibit space. Please call (518) 887-5073 for an application or email mabee@nycap.rr.com.



Early Technologies Day

Saturday, August 5th
10 am—4 pm

Flint knapping
Fire starting
Atlatl throwing
Rope making
Early blacksmithing
Dutch Oven cooking
Primitive crafts for kids
Free Admission



MABEE FARM HISTORIC SITE

Route 5S, Rotterdam Junction, NY
(518) 887-5073

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Mabee Farm has surpassed itself once again with the number of students this spring – over 2,400 students in 22 days!

NEW PROGRAM ON ENSLAVED PEOPLE AT THE MABEE FARM

The Mabee Farm has added a new component to its 7th grade educational program. Cliff Mealey, a local photographer and slave re-enactor took on the persona of Jacob Mabee's slave Jack, who was given to Jacob's oldest son John at the time of his death. It is documented that Jack was sent to Crown Point and then on to Lake George with stores for the Militia in 1755-1756.

MABEE FARM RECEIVES A CANAL CORPORATION GRANT

Mabee Farm is proud to announce it has received a matching grant from the New York State Canal Corp for the publication of a 4 color brochure on the history of the bateaux. Many thanks go to David Manthey, the Captain of our Bateaux crew for his research and copy. The Farm partnered with the New Netherlands Routes, which has a panel in the brochure concerning it's building of the Onrust.



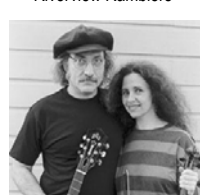
John Kirk & Trish Miller



Chris Shaw & Bridget Ball



Riverview Ramblers



Whitman & Pantell

Canalfest Lock 7-12 Music Festival

Sat. & Sun. - July 8 & 9

John Kirk & Trish Miller

Chris Shaw & Bridget Ball

Whitman & Pantell

Riverview Ramblers

Annie & the Hedonists

Gary Van Slyke

Workshops

Saturday - Wagon Rides

Sunday - Kayak Demonstration

Great food

MABEE FARM HISTORIC SITE

Route 5S, Rotterdam Junction
(518) 887-5073
www.lock7-12canalfest.com

GE Matching Gift

The Society has received its annual matching gift from General Electric conveyed to us from the GE Matching Gift Foundation, Robert L. Corcoran, President. This year's gift was in the amount of \$13,380, earned through the generosity of our GE-eligible members to whom we are extremely grateful.

RE-ENACTMENT AT MABEE FARM MAY 20, 2006



*Thanks to
Laurin Trainer*

*for her generous
permission to use
these great photos*

ltrainer@nycap.rr.com



Johanna's Retirement Party

On Friday evening, June 2, 14 years to the day that she reported for work at the Society, Trustees, staff, and friends of Office Manager Johanna Woldring gathered in the Vrooman Room to honor her upon her retirement. Johanna, known to us affectionately as "Jokie" (Yo-key), was and is much beloved for her unfailing good humor, elegance, and the gracious way she greeted one and all, member and visitor, who

entered the office at 32 Washington Avenue. All of us will miss seeing her signature on those little cards that certified that our membership had been renewed, always a quiet little victory for Jokie and the trusted database management program that she at first approached with trepidation and then mastered so well. Jokie, we will miss you very much, but do come back to see us often.



Above: Jokie with Tracey and Hendrik Woldring and her grandchildren Marie, Aleida, and Elizabeth.



Right: Jokie cuts her retirement cake.

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